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ABSTRACT

Intended for composition teachers who see "editor/writer" conferences as the ideal teaching strategy, this booklet offers a procedure for training tutors--staff or students--to respond skillfully to a writer's work in a one-to-one context. The first half of the booklet discusses theory and research regarding the tutorial process and some principles underlying the subsequent tutorial model. The second half examines the writing and tutoring processes, and presents a schedule for training tutors. (HTH)

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THEORY & RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

# Training Tutors for Writing Conferences

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# Training Tutors for Writing Conferences

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# Foreword

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national information system developed by the U.S. Office of Education and now sponsored by the National Institute of Education (NIE). ERIC provides ready access to descriptions of exemplary programs, research and development reports, and related information useful in developing effective educational programs.

Through its network of specialized centers or clearinghouses, each of which is responsible for a particular educational area, ERIC acquires, evaluates, abstracts, and indexes current information and lists that information in its reference publications.

The ERIC system has already made available—through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service—a considerable body of data, including all federally funded research reports since 1956. However, if the findings of educational research are to be used by teachers, much of the data must be translated into an essentially different context. Rather than resting at the point of making research reports easily accessible, NIE has directed the ERIC clearinghouses to commission authorities in various fields to write information analysis papers.

As with all federal educational information efforts, ERIC has as a primary goal bridging the gap between educational theory and classroom practice. One method of achieving that goal is the development by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS) of a series of booklets designed to meet concrete educational needs. Each booklet provides teachers with a review of the best educational theory and research on a limited topic, followed by descriptions of classroom activities that will assist teachers in putting that theory into practice.

The idea is not unique. Several educational journals and many commercial textbooks offer similar aids. The ERIC/RCS booklets are, however, noteworthy in their sharp focus on educational needs and their pairing of sound academic theory with tested classroom practice. And they have been developed in response to the increasing number of requests from teachers to provide this kind of service.

Topics for these booklets are recommended by the ERIC/RCS National Advisory Board. Suggestions for topics are welcomed by the Board and should be directed to the Clearinghouse.

Charles Suhor
Director, ERIC/RCS

# 1 Theory and Research

Socrates, according to Gilbert Highet (1950), was the first tutor because he taught through conversation, particularly by asking questions. He refused to make authoritative statements, encouraging his students to discover truths through their own thinking processes. Then, too, says Highet, Socrates was adaptable and good humored.

Teachers who recognize the value of tutorials may wonder how Socrates' teaching style can be managed in overcrowded classrooms and labs. The question is especially relevant to composition teachers who see editor-writer conferences as the ideal strategy but one that is nearly impossible for an individual instructor to achieve. In response to that dilemma, this book offers a procedure for training tutors—staff or students—to respond skillfully to a writer's work in a one-to-one context. Whether a few tutors work in a writing lab or all students tutor each other in class, the essential prerequisite is training.

Four principles underlie the tutoring model to be described here. The first two are embodied in the Socratic style; the second two address in realistic terms the exigencies of time and personnel.

*The first principle: establish and maintain rapport.* Tutoring is face-to-face interaction and as such requires that both tutor and writer are relaxed and confident. The tutor must show an interested concern from the outset if the writer is to enter the interaction easily and develop self-confidence as well as confidence in the tutor.

*The second principle: the writer does the work.* The tutor is not a rewriter; rather, he or she is a trained assistant who suggests strategies for the writer to experiment with. As in the Socratic method, the writer discovers the best solution to the problem. The writer always does the work; the tutor monitors and guides the forming draft.

*The third principle: high-order concerns come before low-order concerns.* Some writing concerns are more important than others because of the enormous effect they have on the quality of the piece. Since the goal is to improve the piece within reasonable time limits, the tutor checks first for problems related to high-order concerns. Time must be spent where it will yield the greatest improvement.

*The fourth principle: tutors do not have to be experts.* Tutors need to be reassured that the level of expertise they bring to a writing conference is sufficient. They need to be reminded that their task is to help a writer improve a piece; improvement, not perfection, is the goal. Ideally, tutors should be above-average writers who relate well to people, but all tutors require training.

The best tutors are those who have been trained to follow an organized procedure or tutoring model. Four areas of recent research suggest components for that model and perimeters for that procedure.

**One-to-One Collaboration**

The core of the tutorial process is one-to-one instruction, a teaching approach that finds considerable theoretical support. Carl Rogers (1969) applies features of his client-centered counseling technique to instruction, stressing that the nature of the relationship between teacher and student is crucial. Rogers argues that an effective teacher must exhibit "realness." When the teacher enters "into a relationship with the learner without presenting a front or facade, he is much more likely to be effective" (p. 106). Rogers also believes that a teacher should be able to accept (or prize) the learner as a separate person with worth in his or her own right and to understand empathically, from the inside, the student's reactions.

Like Rogers, Benjamin Bloom (1976) sees one-to-one teaching as ideal because it focuses on the "management of learning" rather than on the "management of learners" (p. 112). According to Bloom, a tutor must first discover what the student knows and needs to know; the tutor then tries to cue the student about what needs to be done, either by talking or demonstrating. The tutor's goal is to get the student to participate actively in the learning process. To that end and especially at the beginning of a learning activity, the tutor expresses encouragement when the student is successful. The type of encouragement or reinforcement varies, of course, with the learner and the learning situation, but the tutor attempts to create a setting in which the learner develops a personal source of reinforcement and the tutor provides feedback and correction along the way.

Other theories of one-to-one teaching build on role relationships and social skills theory. Sarbin (1976), for example, suggests that an effective tutor is one who plays a role well. A transformation occurs, however, as tutors grow closer to their students: tutors gradually give up the role of classroom teacher and assume a role "linkage" in which they are part teacher, part guardian. According to social skills theory (Argyle 1976, for example), communication during a tutorial session helps tutor and student grow in social give-and-take: conveying information, asking ques-

tions, giving instructions of varying degrees of directiveness, chatting informally, expressing emotions and interpersonal attitudes.

One-to-one collaboration not only has a firm base in educational theory as a teaching tool and socializing device, but it can also be described through ethnographic investigation. By observing and analyzing face-to-face interaction, ethnographers have revealed patterns and structural relationships that occur whenever individuals meet. Of particular value to prospective writing tutors is how ethnographers describe conversation that takes place during face-to-face meetings. Their insights suggest guides for the conversational behavior of writing tutors during conference dialogues. Erving Goffman (1974) describes cues for "requesting the floor and giving it up," as speakers share "turns of talking" (p. 150). Matthew Speier (1972) analyzes two-party talk through a system of labels. He identifies three conversational "tying" procedures that organize the ongoing speech of participants. In the first, *question-and-answer sequences*, a questioner sets up a chain of questions and answers. The types of questions can be categorized as rhetorical, those calling for no response; closed, those calling for yes or no answers or short responses; open, those calling for broadly inclusive statements, assertions, or narratives; probe-and-prompt, those asking for more detail; and leading, those that answer themselves or lead the respondent to parrot information already known to the questioner. In the second, *elliptical utterances,* speakers and hearers tie their productions together by referring back to an utterance made before the previous, contiguous one. In the third, *utterance extension and completion*, speakers extend a previous utterance or add meaningful elements to speech in progress (pp. 421–27).

One-to-one collaboration as a teaching strategy is firmly rooted in educational theory and its processes are being described in ethnographic research. Even more recently, composition specialists have begun to investigate the interaction between writing tutor and student writer. The work of these researchers suggests important directions in developing tutorial procedures.

**The Interaction between Tutor and Writer**

Several composition studies have used ethnographic methods (in which the researcher is a participant/observer) to describe the tutorial process. Jacobs and Karliner (1977) examined the dialogue between tutor and writer to determine how the segments or phases of a conference could be framed in order to a) observe the role-playing of tutor and writer and b) assess the relationship between conference talk and changes from draft to

revision. Jacobs and Karliner conclude that when a student needs more time to think about a topic, the tutor should not go on to other concerns. If the tutor persists, he or she becomes a director of the conference and the student tends to become increasingly passive. Another of their conclusions is that tutors should use mirroring techniques, genuinely personal comments, and occasional questions for which they don't have answers. These tactics bring about a change in roles from teacher-student to conversant-conversant. Finally, Jacobs and Karliner recommend that the tutor's stance throughout a conference be flexible or variable. Depending upon the kind of help needed by the student at a particular moment, the tutor should switch roles—"anywhere from friendly authoritarian to fellow conversant to recorder" (p. 505).

In a follow-up study, Beaumont (1978) suggests that the roles played by tutors have an impact on the writing abilities of their students. The most common and effective tutor roles are "interested reader/listener," "evaluator," and "partner in writing." Tutors who are listeners and partners, who limit their evaluation, and who allow students to talk are the tutors most likely to evoke substantial revision in student writing (pp. 79–82).

Commenting on Beaumont's findings, Karliner (1978) notes that in order for a conference to be successful, not only must work take place but the student must take an active role in processing ideas. A tutor who consistently adopts the role of evaluator does not usually elicit more work from the student (p. 12). In a separate study, Karliner (1979) found a clear relationship between the role assumed by the instructor in a writing conference and participation by the student. When the instructor acts as error detector and prescriber of remedies, the student tends to remain a passive recipient of information. When, on the other hand, the instructor assumes the role of collaborator, an interested but sometimes confused reader who wants to help the writer articulate ideas more clearly, the student responds by making more substantive changes in the writing draft (p. 21).

The descriptive research of Reigstad (1980a) examined the structure of forty conferences conducted by ten tutors who were also professional writers and found certain components in common. Most of the tutorial time was spent working on one or two central writing problems; tutors tended to read aloud from student drafts; questioning was a major part of tutor talk; tutors adopted the roles of interested reader, evaluator, and partner in writing; and tutors generally established a nonthreatening, informal climate (p. 302).

Reigstad also identified three general models for conducting writing conferences. Model One is teacher-centered. Tutors do most of the talking

and much of the work for students. Tutors also tend to pose closed or leading questions and to control moves to each new phase of the conference. They adopt the roles of expert, rule giver, and initiator and generally maintain a teacher-student relationship. In Model Two, tutors continue to initiate moves to new segments of the conference, but they also use probe-and-prompt questions to draw students into exploratory or other "off-the-paper" talk and to involve them in the problem-solving process. Tutors in Model Two tend to adopt the roles of interested reader, listener, and initiator, generally establishing a conversant-conversant relationship with students. Model Three is student-centered. Students do most of the talking and most of the work on their papers; they also determine the direction of the conference. Tutors ask open as well as probe-and-prompt questions and listen as students describe their composing processes, the problems they encountered, and their opinions of their drafts *before* offering reactions and suggestions. The tutor-student relationship is consistently conversant-conversant, and the most frequently adopted tutor roles are listener, partner in writing, and interested reader (p. 303).

While cautioning against drawing easy parallels between counselor and writing tutor, Duke (1975) suggests that the writing conference be structured around nondirective questioning and supportive comments by the tutor. He describes five techniques that tutors might incorporate into the various stages of the conference. At the beginning of the conference, in order to help the student understand what is going to occur and to give the student initiative to determine the direction of the conference, the tutor should employ *focusing* and give *nondirective leads*. Throughout the conference, the tutor should help the student understand what has been communicated in each draft and show that what the student has written is interesting through *clarification* (asking for additional information or restating what the writer means). In order to foster the student's self-esteem, the tutor should use *acceptance words* that "reflect agreement, along with comprehension of what is being said, without expressing . . . value judgments" (p. 45). Finally, the tutor should resort to *reassurance phrasing* (expressing a shared feeling or thought) when the student appears to need more than acceptance or approval.

Also adapting an interaction model from another discipline is Arbur (1977), who asks writing tutors to follow steps borrowed from the interview model of the social worker. Arbur's writing conference includes seven phases: engagement, exploration of problems, identification of a problem, agreement to work on the problem together, task assignment, solution, and termination.

Without labeling specific stages, Cooper (1975, 1977) suggests that tutors establish an overall structure for conferences by asking well-focused

questions. Implied in Cooper's procedure, however, is a sense of sequence: the tutor should focus on only a few problems at a time; the tutor should continue to ask the student to identify writing problems until the last stages of revision; and the tutor should be sure the student has a clear idea of what to do next. Cooper has also identified three emphases for questions, again with a built-in order: the rhetorical emphasis, the intellectual emphasis, and the syntactical emphasis.

Another procedure has been devised by Garrison (1974), who equates the roles of the tutor and student to those of editor and writer. He recommends brief conferences (three to five minutes) focusing on a single problem that the student and tutor have identified as important. Although Garrison urges tutors to be supportive, he warns against too much small talk. His basic procedure follows three steps. In the first, the tutor reads the paper analytically. After talking it over with the student, the tutor diagnoses major problems. Finally, the tutor offers a prescription by suggesting what needs to be done to solve these problems. Garrison (1981) refers to the "priorities of attention" for individual conferences, beginning with problems of idea or subject and ending with problems of diction (p. 7). Carnicelli's (1980) account of the conference method used at the University of New Hampshire acknowledges its debt to Garrison's priorities model.

**Peer Tutors in Classrooms and Labs**

In order for peer tutors to be effective, they must have firsthand experience in writing themselves, but they must also be trained to use time efficiently, to know what to look for in a fellow student's paper, to offer appropriate strategies to help the writer overcome specific problems, and to demonstrate sensitive, facilitating behavior (Klaus 1975; Smith 1975). In addition, a learning environment suited to peer tutoring needs to be established. Several studies describe how labs or classroom workshops can be organized so that students are able to critique each other's work in pairs or small groups (Kelly 1973; Bruffee 1973, 1980; Elbow 1973; Beck, Hawkins, and Silver 1978). One important suggestion (Podis 1980) is that peer tutors learn to ask questions according to a priority of concerns, from "What is the main idea of the paper?" to "Are all sentences clear and grammatical?"

Peer tutors not only develop their own writing and socialization skills when they respond to the writing of their peers but also provide an important source of feedback for their classmates. Instead of writing only for their instructor, students have a second, less authoritarian audience in

mind. Moffett (1968), for example, believes that "in general, classmates are a more effective audience" (p. 194).

There are many variations of writing labs—drop-in tutorial services, referral centers for basic writers, labs linked to credit-bearing courses. Whether integrated with or supplemental to classroom instruction, writing labs are based on the premise that students can be helped by trained tutors. Responses from seventy-eight college writing centers, labs, and clinics to a survey by the Conference on College Composition and Communication indicated that "one-to-one instruction is at the heart of the skills-center experience" (McPherson 1976, 10).

Most writing labs provide training for their tutors. Typically, trainees examine how writers compose, learn what problems beginning and experienced writers encounter, and discover how writing can be taught through individual conferences. Tutors also often read pertinent articles, role-play conference situations, practice a tutoring model, and become familiar with record-keeping systems. Resources that discuss how successful writing labs were established—from tutor selection and training to designing the physical setting—include Hartwell (1980) and Reigstad (1980b). Writing lab management techniques and problems are also covered by Steward and Croft (1982) and in *Writing Lab Newsletter* (Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana).

**The Effectiveness of One-to-One Writing Instruction**

Several research studies confirm what writing teachers believe about the value of one-to-one collaboration. Shaver and Nuhn (1971) found significant improvement in the mean STEP scores of underachievers in reading and writing at several grade levels who received conference-only instruction. A study that evaluated an experimental tutorial program in Buffalo secondary schools (Reigstad, Williamson, and Matsuhashi 1980) found that 78 percent of the participants improved in one of the diagnostic categories after eight weeks of tutoring.

Most of the two-group comparison studies have been done with basic writers. College basic writers who attended conferences regularly throughout writing lab courses improved their attitude toward writing and learned as much about grammar, structure, and usage as did a classroom-lecture group (Tomlinson 1975), had more and significantly larger improvements in various categories of writing than did a classroom-taught group (Maize 1954), increased their overall achievement in writing skills (Fritts 1976; Farmer 1976), and earned a high grade-point average in subsequent English classes (Sutton and Arnold 1974). Other studies report similarly

encouraging results. Kates (1973) assessed the one-semester growth of college writers in all California community colleges and universities and found that conferences were extensively used in many of the institutions where students improved the most. Finally, a project by the Los Angeles Community College District (Simmons 1979) found that students on four campuses who were taught via Garrison's conference method made greater gains in writing than did students in control sections.

# 2 Practice

The tutor-training procedures described here are divided into two phases: learning about the composing process and learning about the tutoring process. Learning about the tutoring process takes precedence because tutors, like all students, tend to think about writing in immediate terms of product, the result of writing, rather than in terms of the process that creates those products.

## Learning about the Composing Process

Whether preparing students to respond to each other in writing class or training tutors for a writing lab, the immediate focus of attention is the process of composing. Perl (1979) points out that struggling writers are often so concerned with editing for correctness that the natural rhythm of the composing process is interrupted. Before jumping into a tutoring situation, therefore, tutors need to understand that writing is a recursive process of prewriting, planning, transcribing, revising, and editing. In our model, prospective students learn about the composing process in three ways: by finding out what scholars and researchers have to say about composing, by discovering how writers themselves describe the act of writing, and by experiencing the composing process firsthand.

### *What Research Says*

We first ask tutors to consider Gordon Rohman's (1965) model of the composing process. Based on what the piece of writing looks like as it unfolds, his model is a good example of a product-centered one. At the prewriting stage, there is no writing on the paper; during the writing stage, the paper begins to be filled; and at the rewriting stage, the writing on the page is reworked.

We turn next to Janet Emig's (1971) writing model, which, while product-centered, pays some attention to process. Emig specifies aspects of the composing act that occur and recur as a piece of writing develops. Her process-oriented extension of Rohman's composing model includes

prewriting (planning, starting), writing (accompanied by hesitations and silence), and rewriting (reformulating, correcting, revising).

Finally, we explain to tutors that the cognitive, process-centered model of Flower and Hayes (1981) shows how the processes that occur in the writer's mind are central to the composing process. The mental processes of generating, translating, and reviewing interact with the rhetorical situation, the text thus far, and the writer's memory. The writer repeatedly pauses to read the text as it stands, to make new decisions, and to put ideas into language on the page.

### *What Writers Say*

After acquainting tutors with the composing process as formulated by scholars, we share with them comments by professional writers on the act of writing. The following quotations are taken from Donald Murray's *A Writer Teaches Writing* (pp. 236–44).

> Writers kid themselves—about themselves and other people. Take the talk about writing methods. Writing is just work—there's no secret. If you dictate or use a pen or type or write with your toes—it is still just work. (Sinclair Lewis)
>
> *Hemingway* I rewrote the ending of *Farewell to Arms*, the last page of it, thirty-nine times before I was satisfied.
> *Interviewer* Was there some technical problem there? What was it that had you stumped?
> *Hemingway* Getting the words right.
>
> How do I know what I think until I see what I say? (E. M. Forster)
>
> The reward of writing is in the writing itself. It comes with finding the right word. The quest for a superb sentence is a groping for honesty, a search for the innermost self, a self-discipline, a generous giving out of one's most intimate rhythms and meanings. To be a writer is to sit down at one's desk in the chill portion of every day, and to write; not from the breastbone—just plain going at it, in plain delight. To be a writer is to throw away a great deal, not to be satisfied, to type again, and once more, over and over. (John Hersey)
>
> The more a man writes, the more he can write. (William Hazlitt)
>
> I can't understand how anyone can write without rewriting everything over and over again. I scarcely ever reread my published writings, but if by chance I come across a page, it always strikes me: all this must be rewritten; this is how I should have written it. (Leo Tolstoy)

After considering statements such as these, students understand that writers view writing as *rewriting*, as work, and as a tremendous source of satisfaction.

*Through Hands-on Experience*

Finally, we ask tutors to learn about the composing process by practicing it themselves. We give instructions for a composing exercise that requires tutors to generate a writing topic, provide information on that topic, and produce a rough draft and a revision. This learning-by-doing exercise is accomplished on three 3″ × 5″ cards and takes only about forty minutes. The directions and a sample response are shown in Figure 1.

Tutors also experience the composing process by writing an essay entitled "How I Write" in which they describe their own writing processes, habits, and rituals. We ask them to complete this essay before the next stage in tutor training. As a reference while writing this essay, we distribute the handout on the composing process (Murray 1979) shown in Figure 2.

**Learning about the Tutoring Process**

The drafts of the "How I Write" essay provide the raw material for initial training sessions. In this instance, tutors are like most writers who seek tutoring; they already have a draft they want to improve. The case of writers without drafts is dealt with later.

We begin by introducing tutors to what we call the priority of concerns, that is, their approach to a piece of writing should focus on Higher Order Concerns (HOCs) and then on Lower Order Concerns (LOCs). As the names imply, some types of problems are more responsible for the low quality of a piece than others. Since the tutoring session is geared to improving the piece within reasonable time limits, these more serious problems must be given priority.

*Higher Order Concerns (HOCs)*

The four priority concerns we have dubbed HOCs are thesis or focus, appropriate voice or tone, organization, and development. Weakness in these areas can devastate a paper, and tutors must learn to respect them at the outset. With the four HOCs in mind, they turn to the "How I Write" drafts.

The first priority concern, *thesis or focus*, is explained to tutors with examples of student writing and examples from composition textbooks (Skwire 1979, chapter 1 is particularly useful). Tutors then read the "How I Write" drafts of their classmates, looking only for problems with focus and statement of thesis. Examples are shared among the class.

The logical next step is to suggest to tutors how a writer can improve the focus of a paper and the clarity of its thesis. One strategy is to ask the

**Composing Exercise**

Complete each of the following steps on a separate 3" × 5" card. A sample response to each step is given on the facing page.

*Step 1.* Think of an experience, a person, or a place and list 20–25 specific details (words, phrases, impressions) about it on card 1.

*Step 2.* Circle the most interesting or surprising detail on card 1. On card 2, provide more information about what you have circled. Drive yourself to make this new list of short specific details as long as possible.

*Step 3.* Use the list of details on card 2 to write whole sentences, actually a rough draft, on card 3. Put the information you assembled on card 2 into a meaningful order on card 3. Look for patterns among the specific details, ways to link them together, and ways to organize them. Turn the details into sentences.

*Step 4.* Edit and proofread card 3. Correct grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation. If necessary, recopy what you have written.

Figure 1. Instructions and Sample Response Cards for the Composing Exercise.

Card 1

Working for a Moving Company

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| skins | come-along | carry |
| pads | Johnny bar | roll-a-life machines |
| overseas crates | reefer dolly | weight |
| packing | palletizing | scale |
| picking | containerize | Anjon's |
| base | crate | out-of-towner |
| dolly | mats | estimate |
| two-wheeler | cartons | long haul |
| four-wheeler | tape guns | piano board |

Card 2

Anjon's

| | |
|---|---|
| Two Trip Breakfast | attractive to drivers |
| Country Breakfast specials ($1.55) | Joe K.'s 4 sandwiches |
| slow service (surprisingly) | Walden Ave. |
| not crowded | coffee |
| friendly waitress | juice |
| cheap | toast |
| lunch specials | 2 eggs |
| huge parking lot | home fries |

Card 3

Anjon's restaurant on Walden near Transit is a popular breakfast and lunch eatery for truckers. Although this truck stop might lack good food and fast service, it makes up for it in friendly waitresses, a cheap menu, and that most valuable commodity for tractor trailer drivers—ample parking space. My two dining experiences there have been mixed. The two breakfast specials I've ordered—including coffee, juice (in a thimble-like glass), two eggs, toast, and home fries—for $1.55, have been average. But the waitresses have made it pleasant by joking with me and my fellow workers/diners. In fact, when one crewman ordered four grilled cheese sandwiches for lunch one day, the cook even came out to kid him about his appetite.

**The Composing Process**

The process through which the writer passes to produce an effective piece of writing varies with the writer and the writing task, but the process through which most writers pass most of the time is summarized below.

**Prewriting**

*1. Collect.* Writers know effective writing requires an abundant inventory of specific, accurate information. Information is collected through reading, interviewing, observing, and remembering.

*2. Connect.* Meaning emerges as pieces of information connect and evolve into patterns. The writer plays with the relationships between pieces of information to discover as many patterns of meaning as possible.

*3. Rehearse.* Mentally and on paper, the writer follows language toward meaning. The writer rehearses titles, leads, partial drafts, sections of a potential piece of writing to discover the voice and the form that will lead to meaning and communication.

**Writing**

*4. Draft.* The writer completes a discovery draft, usually written as fast as possible, often without notes, to find out what he or she knows and does not know, what works and does not work. The writer is particularly interested in what works, since most effective writing is built from extending and reinforcing the positive elements in what has been written.

**Rewriting**

*5. Develop.* The writer explores the subject by developing each point through definition, description, and documentation which show as well as tell the writer, and then the reader, what the piece of writing means. The writer usually needs to add information to understand the potential meaning of what has been written and often must restructure the successive drafts.

*6. Clarify.* The writer anticipates and answers the readers' questions. At this stage the writer cuts what is unnecessary and adds those spontaneous touches we call "style." These changes produce the illusion of easy writing that means easy reading.

*7. Edit.* The writer goes over the piece line by line, often reading aloud, to make sure that each word, each mark of punctuation, contributes to the effectiveness of the piece of writing. The writer uses the most simple words appropriate to the meaning, writes primarily with verbs and nouns, respects the subject-verb-object sentence, builds paragraphs which carry a full load of meaning, and continues to use specific, accurate information as the raw material of vigorous, effective writing. The writer avoids breaks with the customs of spelling and language that do not clarify meaning.

Figure 2. The Composing Process Handout.

writer to jot down a one-sentence summary of the piece (Elbow 1973, 86). Difficulty with this task demonstrates to the writer that something is wrong, and rewritings of the one-sentence summary often help the writer discover the focus of the paper and, therefore, its thesis. A useful way to initiate the summary process is for the tutor to ask the writer to explain the essence of the paper while the tutor takes notes. Using these notes, the tutor then tries to restate the essence. Finally, the writer writes the summary in one or two sentences. This process clarifies thesis and focus by requiring conceptualization and the concomitant distinguishing of major and minor ideas.

Tutors can also ask the writer to try "nutshelling" and teaching (Flower, 1981, 86–87), a process similar to summarizing. The writer explains orally the essence of the piece while the tutor tries to express that essence in a few sentences—in a nutshell. Tutor and writer then discuss the nutshell until the writer agrees that it is generally accurate. The writer now role-plays a teacher who is trying to teach the essentials of the paper. Nutshelling requires the writer to distinguish between major and minor ideas just as the one-sentence summary did, but teaching requires the writer to consider the needs of the audience, selecting those ideas that will be most meaningful and organizing them in a way that will allow someone who knows little about the subject to understand and remember its major points.

Whether the tutor suggests a one-sentence summary, nutshelling and teaching, or some other technique, the tutor must understand that the first question to ask about a draft is "Does the piece have a clear focus and a central thesis?" If the answer is no, the tutor helps the writer discover and state the thesis. If the answer is yes, the tutor makes a positive comment about the clarity of thesis and focus and moves on.

The second HOC is *appropriate voice or tone*. If the voice or tone is not appropriate to the writer's audience and intentions or lapses into inappropriateness, the tutor suggests ways for the writer to hear and correct this inappropriateness.

We train tutors to help writers hear and correct inappropriate voice or tone by crossing Walker Gibson's (1966) three modern American prose styles—tough, sweet, and stuffy—with a simplified version of Martin Joos's (1961) registers of modern English—formal, consultative, and casual.

Tough style is the voice of a hard person who has been around. The author has a close relationship with the reader but is preoccupied by a particular view of the world. The language is simple and direct; strong feelings are concealed behind a curt manner. Sweet style is the style of advertising. The voice speaks directly and informally to the reader as a

particular person. The intention is to secure intimacy, and the language is ingeniously contrived, sometimes to the point of stylized exaggeration, to build a bridge of warmth and closeness to the reader. Stuffy style is the language of official prose written with the voice of an organization or group. It is the inflated officialese that refuses to assume a personal voice. We read it daily in legislation, in contracts, in proposals, and—unfortunately—in some scholarly journals.

After tutors become familiar with these three styles through explanation and examples, they turn to Joos's formal, consultative, and casual registers. We characterize the formal register as the register of the research report in a professional journal. Its purpose is to inform a distant reader about technical information. The consultative is the register at which the work of the world gets done. Its purpose is to inform, but now the reader is one who is close and who understands the general background. Consultative style is the style of the policy statement or office memo. Finally, the casual register is the style for friends and insiders. It is the register of the personal letter and assumes that reader and writer share much in the way of knowledge and experience.

Tutors are now ready to use the tough, sweet, and stuffy styles and the formal, consultative, and casual registers to discuss with the writer the voice or tone that actually exists in the piece as well as a suitable voice or tone for the piece. Their first discovery is that the six seldom exist in pure form but only in a mixture, a blend determined by the rhetorical constraints of audience and the writer's intentions. Toward this end, the

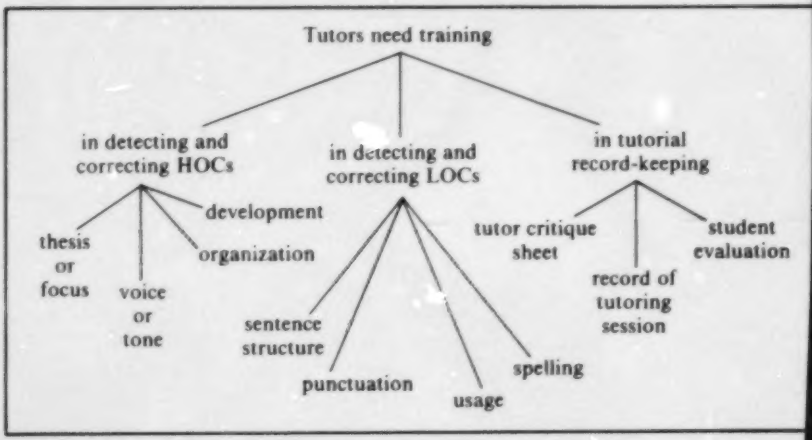


Figure 3. An Issue Tree That Outlines Some of the Training Needs of Tutors.

writer reads the paper or parts of it aloud, concentrating on the voice that is heard and its appropriateness to the audience and intent. This reading can be recorded and played back for both writer and tutor to discuss.

Tutors, then, must be trained to ask the second question about a piece of writing, "Is the voice or tone appropriate for the given audience and purpose?" If the answer is yes, the tutor again comments positively to the writer or reads a particularly successful section aloud so that the writer increases his or her awareness of appropriate voice. If voice or tone is inappropriate, totally or in part, the tutor refers to the Gibson/Joos categories to help the writer revise. Reading aloud is again in order to compare appropriate and inappropriate voices.

Tutors now move to the third HOC, *lack of effective organization and structure*. When a paper has a less than effective organization, the tutor can suggest that the writer outline it while the tutor watches. Most students are familiar with the technique of outlining, so the tutor needn't explain much about the technique itself. The task, however, is difficult if the material is disorganized, and the tutor can help with questions that guide the writer to more structured revisions.

Another technique for tutors to try is the "issue tree" (Flower 1981). Although an issue tree is similar to an outline, tutors will discover that some writers find it easier to use because it is more visual and because it represents a new way to envision organization. To build an issue tree, the writer arranges ideas hierarchically, with the most inclusive at the top; the others are arranged as subsystems under it (Figure 3). An issue tree clarifies the structure of a paper, but it also indicates areas that need development or pruning. The tutor can assist the writer in sketching an issue tree, and difficulties encountered are probably indicative of problems in organization, which can then be addressed.

Whether relying on outlining or on an issue tree, the tutor attempts to improve the organization of the paper. If the draft the writer brought to the tutoring session has an effective organization, a comment by the tutor to this effect is supportive. A quick sketch of the structure is also useful because it enables the writer to see at a glance the skeleton of a well-organized paper.

The final HOC that tutors are trained to consider is *adequate development*. The work on organization many times yields insights about parts of the paper that need development. At other times, a draft is effectively organized but nevertheless needs further development. In either case, the tutor must show the writer ways of finding or creating detail.

One technique is focused freewriting (Elbow 1973, 9). The tutor asks the writer to write continuously for five to fifteen minutes, recording

everything or anything that comes to mind about an aspect of the paper that needs expansion. The most germane and significant ideas in the focused freewriting are then incorporated into the draft. This technique can be repeated wherever the draft needs more development.

Tutors can also use oral composing to help writers develop a draft or any part of it. The tutor tells the writer, "Tell—off the top of your head—what you *think* you *might* write; speak as if you were talking to yourself." The tutor tape-records or takes notes on this talk. Just as in focused freewriting, relevant ideas, phrases, and sentences are incorporated into the draft. If the paper or a section of it needs even further development, the writer repeats the oral composing technique or switches back to focused freewriting. Either technique can be effective, and it is the answer to the question "Does the paper have adequate development throughout?" that determines the direction of the tutor's efforts.

*Lower Order Concerns (LOCs)*

After tutors have addressed the higher order concerns, they turn to LOCs, concerns that deal with units of sentence length or smaller. The emphasis shifts from the draft as a whole to sentence structure, punctuation, usage, and spelling. Tutors may require training in these areas, whether in class or with auto-instructional review modules and workbooks. But, most important, they must recognize that they are not expected to detect and correct *all* problems, only to decrease their frequency and thereby improve the piece. With this qualification in mind, tutors gain confidence in their ability to detect and correct these types of problems.

Tutors may wait and treat LOCs at the end of the session or work on them during the revision of HOCs—as long as this concern for less important kinds of problems does not shift the focus of revision from the much more significant HOCs. This shift, unfortunately, is likely to happen since both writers and tutors are more familiar with lower order problems and have more to say about them. Tutors, therefore, must be very careful not to become distracted by LOCs at the expense of HOCs.

Although in reality LOCs are checked almost simultaneously, the first LOC to be considered in training tutors is sentence structure. Tutors should point out problems with awkward or incorrect structure, with sentence length, and with sentence variety. Although tutors may be unable to label the particular problem they have detected, their sense that something is wrong gives the writer a chance for revision that would otherwise have been missed.

Merely writing sentences "another way" may lead the way to improvement. Long sentences that got out of control for whatever reason can be

broken into shorter ones, and choppy, short sentences can be combined. Sentences that lack variety are relatively easy to spot, and more varied ones can be cast in their place. The emphasis is on the writer rewriting, and the stimulus is the answer to the question "Does the paper contain awkward or incorrect sentences and sentences that are too choppy or too long?" If the answer is yes, the tutor works as described above; if no, the tutor considers other LOCs.

The remaining LOCs are problems in punctuation, spelling, and usage. These are dealt with in a step-by-step sequence. First, the tutor spots the error but does not point it out. Rather, the tutor points to the sentence or clause in which the error is found and encourages the writer to detect it. If the writer is unable to identify the problem, the tutor points it out but without offering a solution. The writer is given the first chance at correction. If the writer is unable to make a suggestion, the tutor offers alternatives.

Two additional points need to be made about dealing with LOCs. First, although tutors may need direct training to increase their knowledge of LOCs and how to correct them, this training should be limited to the most frequent problems exhibited by the writers they will tutor. Training that emphasizes the three to six most frequent punctuation problems and how to correct them is more useful than a complete course in punctuation. Second, tutors should refer writers with recurring problems to the school or campus writing center for additional instruction and practice. If no such option is available, tutors will need to turn to the instructor of the course for help.

A word should be mentioned here about the use of a handbook during the revision of LOCs. Tutors may lack confidence in their ability to deal with LOCs, and their fears can be allayed by familiarizing them with a handbook. They should be encouraged to rely on their own knowledge and skills, while recognizing that all effective instructors turn to references and authorities from time to time.

### *The Writer without a Draft*

Dealing with HOCs and LOCs implies that a writer brings a draft of the piece to the writing session. Generally this is the case, but sometimes the writer has only the beginning of a draft or no draft at all. In this case, the tutor's job is to show the writer how to discover a subject to write about, how to develop the newly discovered subject with information and ideas, and how to cast the information and ideas into a draft.

To help the writer find a subject, the tutor can suggest open freewriting (Elbow 1973, 3) or writing continuously about anything until a subject

for the paper emerges. The writer must toss around possible subjects as quickly as they come to mind until one sticks. The continuous writing keeps the door open, the flow going, until this happens.

Another technique is the "twenty-things" strategy. The tutor asks the writer to list twenty topics that he or she knows about. The writer then checks ten as topics he or she knows enough about to write about. The three most interesting topics are circled next, and for each of these the writer lists at least ten specifics or details. The writer usually decides to write about the topic with the list that was longest or easiest to produce.

When the writer has focused on a subject, the tutor's job is to show the writer how to find what to say about the subject. Tutors can suggest that the writer continue freewriting, but now the activity becomes focused freewriting that records anything and everything about one particular subject. In fact, the switch from open to focused freewriting need not require a pause. The writer can write continuously until a subject is found and then immediately write continuously, focusing on that subject.

A more systematic way to develop a subject is to follow a heuristic procedure (Young, Becker, and Pike 1970) or use a series of questions (Larson 1975). In responding to the prompts of the heuristic procedure or in answering the questions, the writer is able to consider the subject from many points of view. The heuristic procedure or the questions are written on a handout, and the tutor asks the writer to respond to each prompt or question, keeping the subject in mind. These responses should be as thorough as possible and jotted down on the handout or on a separate sheet. These notes are then available to be incorporated into the draft.

Whether through freewriting or through a more systematic procedure, the writer ends up with a great deal of material, some or even most of which must be incorporated into a draft. The tutor must now show the writer how to make the drafting process easier. One way is to suggest that a writer use what journalists call a "lead," a standard beginning that puts the writing process into motion. Garrison (1981, 26) suggests twelve leads with which tutors should be familiar: anecdote, startling statement, narrative, summary, quotation, question, description, general statement, analogy, direct address to the reader, statement of purpose, and the news pentad. When the writer has difficulty starting to write or has written portions of the draft but is having trouble finding a good beginning, the tutor can run through these leads until one strikes the writer as particularly useful.

When the inertia of beginning a draft is overcome, the tutor should encourage the writer to keep the flow going at all costs, even if persevering means writing sections that are not exactly right. Later revisions will eliminate the unwanted. If the writer cannot keep the draft growing, the

tutor can recommend that the writer try to force the draft along by building the next sentence on a key word or phrase from the previous sentence. This device, sometimes called "rolling," may not produce the best writing, but it does keep the draft moving which is the crucial point.

Consider for example, the following opening paragraph. The writer got stuck after the third sentence but by repeating key words was able to push through the temporary block and move on to the sentence that led into the rest of the essay.

> *Hjemkomst* means "homecoming" in Norwegian. and that's exactly what the American-built replica of a Viking ship did during the summer of 1982. The ship was handmade in Duluth and began its transatlantic trip from Knife River, Minnesota, on Lake Superior in May. From Knife River, the *Hjemkomst* longship sailed through the Great Lakes, with stops in Detroit, Cleveland, and Buffalo. The ship left the Great Lakes at the Erie Barge Canal and proceeded to New York City. From New York, the crew launched the last leg of its trip home to Bergen, Norway. The 76½-foot, square-sail vessel completed the 3,500-mile voyage triumphantly in mid-July, but not until experiencing several harrowing episodes.

If getting rolling and keeping rolling are difficult for writers, stopping can sometimes be even more difficult. When a logical conclusion is not immediately apparent, a writer may continue writing until fatigue determines the ending. To avoid ending by default, the tutor should be alert for a potential ending to the developing draft so that he or she can interrupt the writer to suggest "framing" the piece at that point. Framing is accomplished by linking the conclusion of the draft with the opening statement. It is a useful device for beginning writers, but it also serves the reader well. Framing helps the reader recall the opening by returning at the end to a word, image, theme, or impression mentioned at the top of the essay. By providing such a hook from the closing back to the opening, the writer establishes a sense of closure, or caps the piece. Returning to (but not merely retelling) an idea or theme expressed in the introduction ties the essay together into a unified whole for the reader.

This device was used in a piece on novelist Ken Kesey (Allen 1975, 29–35). The link between closing and opening is descriptive—the setting, the weather, but particularly Kesey's hat.

The Opening of the Essay

> Ah, yes, feeding the cows. Ken Kesey, at 38, all genial and hulking in his dungaree jacket, his big, tough Buddha face goofy under an ear-flapped green-and-yellow knit cap, strides out through the pasture mud to feed his 26 beef cows, a bale of hay sagging from each hand.

**Tutor Critique Sheet**

1. Make a positive, rapport-creating statement to the writer.

2. Make two positive comments about the paper. What are its strengths?

3. Describe any weakness you find in the areas listed below. Suggest a strategy to eliminate each weakness. Record your comments below.
   a. thesis or focus

   b. voice or tone

   c. organization

   d. development

4. List any weaknesses you see in sentence structure, punctuation, usage, and spelling. Suggest a strategy to eliminate each weakness. Record your comments below.

Figure 4. The Form Used by Tutors to Record In-Class Critiques of Student Writing.

The Closing of the Essay

> Kesey tugs on his onion-spire, ear-flapped, Tibetan-style green-and-yellow knit cap, and they rush out into the rain.

If the writer likes the frame suggested by the tutor and feels the piece has been fully developed, the draft is finished. If not, more writing and more framing are done until the writer is satisfied. It's important, however, for the tutor to be aware of reasonable time limitations: the writer must end the draft somehow. Only when the draft is complete can the discussion of HOCs and LOCs begin.

*Learning about Record Keeping*

How tutors document their interactions with student writers depends on the context. It is important, for example, that the tutor in a classroom encounter jot down responses to the writing under consideration and turn them over to the writer. It is just as crucial for tutors in writing labs to keep detailed records of a different sort. Record-keeping forms need to be devised, therefore, for each setting.

In class, tutors can supplement their conversations with writers by filling out the Tutor Critique Sheet (Figure 4), which reflects the priorities of concern we have been discussing. It begins by reminding the tutor to establish a friendly working relationship with the writer and to include positive statements about the paper. Only then is the tutor asked to identify specific problems in areas of higher order concern and to offer suggestions to the writer for solving them. Finally, the tutor notes lower order errors and suggests strategies to correct them. Keeping a record of the in-class interaction between tutor and writer encourages tutor-student dialogue. Later, it serves as a useful reminder for the writer during revision. It is also a handy evaluation device for instructors who want to monitor the insightfulness, depth, and accuracy of the feedback provided to writers by tutors.

Since writing labs must justify space and funding requisitions, other kinds of records are needed. The form shown in Figure 5 asks for demographic data about the writer and logs problems of the writer and specific activities of the tutor. Later, data from these records may be tabulated and included in annual or evaluation reports on writing-lab accomplishments.

Another way to evaluate the effectiveness of a writing lab and of individual tutors is to ask the student writers who visit the lab for their perceptions. The Student Evaluation (Figure 6) is a quick way of eliciting student judgments on the tutoring they receive. Other versions of writing-lab forms may be found in *Critical Issues in Tutoring* (Schaier n.d.).

**Record of Tutoring Session**

Writer's Name _____

Tutor's Name _____

Program _____

Date _____ Time _____

Answer questions 1–5 before tutoring.

1. How did the writer find out about the lab? Circle all answers that apply.
   teacher campus newspaper poster/flyer friend other _____
2. How many days before the assignment is due? Circle one answer.
   overdue one day within a week more than a week
3. How long is the assigned paper? Circle one answer.
   1–2 pages 2–6 pages 6–12 pages over 12 pages
4. For what course is the assignment? _____
5. Who is the instructor? _____

Answer questions 6–8 after tutoring.

6. How long was the tutoring session? Circle one answer.
   0–15 minutes 15–30 minutes 30–60 minutes 60–90 minutes over 90 minutes
7. What was accomplished during the tutoring session? _____
8. What suggestions did you make to the writer? _____

Figure 5. A Sample Record-Keeping Form for Tutorials Conducted in the Writing Lab.

**Student Evaluation**

Date _____

The writing-lab staff would very much appreciate your evaluation of the instruction you received. Would you please circle the appropriate number for each question? Thank you.

Quality of Instruction: Do you feel that the materials and instruction you received in the lab were appropriate and clear? Were they effectively presented?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| inappropriate, unclear, ineffectively presented | | adequate | | very appropriate, very clear, effectively presented |

Quality of Instructor: Do you feel that the instructor you worked with in the writing lab was generally helpful and competent?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| not helpful, incompetent | | adequate | | very helpful, very competent |

Writing Progress: Do you feel that you made progress with your piece of writing as a result of your lab work?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| no progress | | some progress | | much progress |

Grade Improvement: Do you feel that what you learned in the writing lab enabled you to write better papers in your composition class and therefore receive better grades?

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| grades dropped or did not change | | rose one letter grade | | rose two or more letter grades |

Check all words that describe your tutor.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| _____ approachable | _____ patient | _____ prepared |
| _____ aloof | _____ impatient | _____ unprepared |
| _____ poor listener | _____ helpful | _____ competent |
| _____ good listener | _____ not helpful | _____ incompetent |
| _____ prompt | _____ friendly | _____ effective |
| _____ late | _____ annoyed | _____ ineffective |

Write other comments and suggestions on the back of this sheet.

Figure 6. The Evaluation Form Used by Student Writers Who Visit the Writing Lab.

**Summarizing the Tutoring Model**

The model that evolves from the tutoring process described above is presented here in outline form. It is important that tutors have in mind a step-by-step guide to see them through their first encounters. They need a reminder of what they have learned about the composing and revising processes and a brief restatement of the strategies they are to employ in helping writers.

Part One

Before you begin to tutor:

Get acquainted.

Complete with the writer questions one through five on the Record of Tutoring Session.

Find out what the assignment is, whether the writer understands it fully, and when it is due.

Determine the kind of writing (explanatory, expressive, persuasive, summary, etc.), the intended audience, and the voice required by asking:

1. What are you trying to do in this paper?
2. Are you writing to someone other than your instructor?
3. What kind of writer's voice do you think is most appropriate (friendly and intimate, distant and professional, etc.)?

Determine what approach the writer is already using or is planning to use for the assignment.

Part Two

When the writer lacks a partial or completed draft:

Explore with the writer ways of gathering or producing ideas and materials. Try one or more of the following:

1. Open and focused freewriting
2. The "twenty-things" strategy
3. The 3" × 5" card exercise
4. Oral composing

Explore with the writer possibilities for organizing the ideas and materials. Try one or more of the following:

1. Outlining
2. The issue tree

3. Nutshelling and teaching
4. Journalistic leads (introductions)

When the writer has a partial or completed draft:

Sit next to the writer and read along silently as the writer reads the paper aloud. Encourage the writer to tell you what he or she wants the two of you to look and listen for. Ask the writer the following questions at this stage.

1. What works best in your paper? What do you like best or feel most satisfied about?
2. What works least in the paper? Which parts did you have trouble writing? Which parts don't feel right?

Stop whenever you wish to explore alternatives with the writer. Give the writer every chance to solve a problem before you offer specific solutions. Your task is to help the writer see the problem and solve it. Avoid jumping in and writing out the solution yourself. Let the writer do the writing. Consider questions (and strategies) like the following:

1. Does the beginning begin the piece? Does the ending end it? (journalistic leads and framing)
2. Is the information presented in clear order? Are transitions between paragraphs clear? (outlining and issue tree)
3. Are there weak sections that can be eliminated? At what points does the paper need more detail? (focused freewriting and oral composing)
4. Is the paper sufficiently complex? Are important alternatives explored? Are important questions answered? (oral composing)
5. Is the paper focused? Does it seem to create a single, dominant impression? (one-sentence summary, nutshelling and teaching)

Look at the sentence structure and the mechanics of the draft. Try questions like the following:

1. Have you relied on the subject-verb-object sentence, thus avoiding the wordiness of the passive voice and sentences beginning with "there is" or "there are"?
2. Are there sentences that can be combined or unnecessary words that can be eliminated?
3. Is the movement from sentence to sentence clear? Are sentence boundaries correctly marked?
4. What types of spelling errors are made?
5. Have the rules of usage or mechanics been violated in a way that draws attention from content?

Part Three

At the end of the tutoring session:

Recommend specific self-help materials to the writer when appropriate. These are available through the writing lab.

Complete the remaining items on the Record of Tutoring Session. Describe the work done when the writer has no draft, using phrases like the following:

1. Understanding the assignment
2. Considering audience and voice
3. Discussing the composing process
4. Building confidence
5. Discovering a topic
6. Locating information (suggesting sources)
7. Compiling ideas
8. Organizing ideas
9. Introducing and ending the piece

Describe the work done when the writer has a draft, using phrases like the following:

1. Understanding the assignment
2. Considering the audience and voice
3. Discussing the composing process
4. Stating the thesis and defining the focus
5. Organizing and reordering the draft
6. Deleting information and staying on the topic
7. Expanding the draft
8. Correcting usage, sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation

**Rounding out the Tutoring Process**

Although the basic structure of most tutorial sessions is the same, every encounter with a writer demands an individualized response by the tutor. The model we have described provides orderly, logical procedures, but we also encourage tutors to remain flexible within that framework and to acquire a tutoring style with which they are comfortable. Three options are described in Reigstad's (1980a) study of conferences conducted by professional writers/teachers: student-centered, collaborative, and teacher-centered. Students who are familiar with these options can borrow from any one of the three at a given tutorial moment. Although we highly recommend the student-centered and collaborative options, we recognize that there are occasions in which the teacher-centered option is appropriate.

*Student-Centered Option*

A student-centered tutoring style is desirable because it encourages the writer to do most of the talking and most of the work on the paper. The writer even determines the direction of the session, initiating movement to each new phase of the conference.

A conference conducted by Donald M. Murray at the University of New Hampshire (April 17, 1979) illustrates the point. Murray opened the session by simply asking "So?" The student went on to describe for two minutes her work so far in preparing a draft on health foods. Then, after talking about this draft, the student initiated a shift to a different essay: "Okay. And I've had a few thoughts about my other one." When the discussion about the second piece of writing was over for the student, she shifted back to the first essay: "You don't have any other suggestions about what I should do for that health food article, do you?" Murray responded by suggesting additional sources of information and helping to sharpen the focus of the piece.

The tutor in the student-centered conference listens a great deal, especially early in the conference, asks a few questions, and contributes personal recollections and associations to add to the student's discovery of a subject. For example, when the student writing about health foods was still in the fact-finding stage, Murray suggested looking into health food markets. Later in the conversation, he brought up a personal anecdote related to the subject of the paper (Reigstad 1980a, 172–73).

> *Murray* Yeah, yeah, good. Where are the places that you plan to go?
> *Student* Well, he told me to just basically do my own investigating, to look in as many health food stores as I can.
> *Murray* Yeah. Are you going to Boston for some? I wouldn't necessarily, but if you are, Erewhon is the biggest company in the area. There's one on Milbury Street and there's one in Cambridge.
> *Student* Um-hmm.
> *Murray* And I wouldn't necessarily go to them, because I think there's enough nuts around here that you could . . . (*laughter*) with Portsmouth and New Market area and Exeter, and you know, gee whiz.
> *Student* Uh-huh.
> *Murray* Do you have a car?
> *Student* No.
> *Murray* Wow.
> *Student* I know there's a few in Portsmouth, though, and there's a few people I can contact. Oh! I just happened to stop in at the Health Fair over there and there was a guy over there from a place in Wolfeboro . . .
> *Murray* Yeah.
> *Student* . . . who was doing a lot of the same thing that I'm doing. It was interesting. But, that was "Arborn"?

*Murray* Erewhon. E-r-e, it's *nowhere* spelled backwards.
*Student* Oh, okay . . . .
*Murray* A lot of people who are health nuts here get their stuff imported from there here, in town. We had dinner at a friend's house where everything was pure.
*Student* Um-hmm.
*Murray* That was the big point. They've got disgusting, funny-looking food. It tasted okay, some of it wasn't that great. But, by God, it was pure! . . . The whole thing became so self-conscious (*laughter*). Minnie Mae and I are looking at each other across the natural candles (*laughter*). Then we'd say, "Oh, that's nice!"

Student-centered conferences, then, are conducted in an informal climate in which students are treated as conversational equals and fellow writers. During the first phase, the tutor relies on open or probe-and-prompt questions to draw students out to discuss their drafts or composing processes. In subsequent phases, as students initiate conversation about various problems with composing, the tutor suggests strategies or alternatives.

*Collaborative Option*

The collaborative style, too, has merit since the tutor maintains a flexible posture. The tutor encourages the student, often via open and probe-and-prompt questions to engage in off-the-paper, exploratory talk and to expand upon undeveloped themes in the paper. As a consequence, the tutorial relationship changes from teacher-student to conversant-conversant several times during the conference. How a tutor switches from teacher to conversant to teacher is demonstrated in the following portion of a tutorial conducted by Walker Gibson at the University of Massachusetts (Reigstad 1980a, 183).

*Gibson* All right, let's chat about this little effort on fiction that you've got here and see what we can manage. This is the first piece of fiction . . . I'm losing my voice rapidly. My wife teaches remedial reading in elementary school. So, she sits there all morning, and gets coughed on by these bloody kids. And finally I'm getting it, I think. So we know just the little kid where this cough comes from. I could thank that kid for losing my voice rapidly. First piece of fiction you've ever tried?

A tutor in the collaborative style also moves from talk focused on the paper to off-the-paper talk, bringing off-the-paper conversation back to the draft by encouraging the student to include ideas from that conversation in the paper. An example of such exploratory talk is taken from a conference by Diana George of Pennsylvania State University (Reigstad, 1980a, 294).

*George* Do you feel a sense of identity with the black men on the campus?
*Student* Yes. Well, yes and no. I didn't really know them for a long time, because there are not that many. There's six or seven, for the most, and I didn't really know most of them. But, now I do and I think they are pretty nice guys. But I didn't, like a lot of people would do, I did not immediately go out and try to find the black guys and the black's Dean of Student Affairs. But I did feel insulted that they would necessarily . . .
*George* Boy, is that insidious, are you right.
*Student* And also, I felt insulted that they would immediately give me a black girl to show me around.
*George* Well, they want to make you feel at home.
*Student* But they could have asked me. They would have been putting me on the spot, they'd have asked me. They couldn't have done that, but, something, something just to say, I think something pissed me off.
*George* Any one of these issues . . . could provide focus for this paper.

In a collaborative conference, then, tutor and student share equally in the conversation, in the problem solving, and in the decision making. The tutor, however, initiates the move to a new phase and usually identifies the problem areas on which to focus. A great deal of conference time is spent off the paper, for example, talking about the student's composing process or about information in the draft or ideas growing out of it.

### *Teacher-Centered Option*

When time constraints dictate, tutors should know that a direct, tutor-as-authority conference may be called for. Sometimes, for example, writers desire proofreading at the last minute. Even though the ultimate goal of a tutoring session is to help the writer, not the paper, there are occasions in which a brief (three to five minutes) teacher-centered conference is necessary.

In a teacher-centered conference, the student tends to sit passively as the tutor reads through the draft and, pen in hand, corrects mechanical errors or supplies alternative, improved sentences and paragraphs. The tutor asks few questions, and the questions are usually closed or leading. A teacher-centered tutor issues directives for specific revisions to be made. There is some talk about ideas, usually to allow the student to clarify a point, but off-the-paper talk is restricted.

During a conference at Westbrook College, Roger H. Garrison moves from one problem to another on the student's paper, doing most of the talking and problem solving (Reigstad 1980a, 289).

**Tutoring Option Worksheet**

| | Student-Centered | Collaborative | Teacher-Centered |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Note instances when the tutor switches from talking directly about the paper to talking about other subjects. | | | |
| 2. Record the types of questions by placing a check in the appropriate row each time the tutor asks a question. | | | |
| a. closed: has only one answer | | | |
| b. open: has many possible answers | | | |
| c. leading: has an answer already known by the tutor | | | |
| d. probing: helps the student see possibilities | | | |
| e. yes/no: requires only a yes or no answer | | | |
| 3. Describe the climate of the tutoring session. Choose one word from each pair. | | | |
| a. conversational/lecture-like | | | |
| b. warm/cool | | | |
| c. student/teacher | | | |
| d. mutual effort/individual effort | | | |
| 4. Indicate who talked the most. Choose one. | | | |
| a. tutor | | | |
| b. student | | | |
| c. equal | | | |
| 5. Indicate what was discussed. Choose as many as apply. | | | |
| a. thesis or focus | | | |
| b. voice or tone | | | |
| c. organization | | | |
| d. development | | | |
| e. lower order concerns | | | |

Figure 7. Worksheet for Evaluating Three Tutorial Options.

*Garrison* Ah, this is for runners and joggers, isn't it?
*Student* Um-hmm.
*Garrison* Okay, I think I'd put that in the lead sentence if I were you. Because the title of the event is not entirely clear to the reader who knows nothing about the background of what you say. So when you say is "for runners and joggers," you're adding this information that the reader needs.
*Student* "The race will . . ."
*Garrison* Ah, the sentences themselves are perfectly all right. But I want you to see where you can save a couple of words.
*Student* Okay, "After that later it will begin?"
*Garrison* No. You can save two. See? (*adds "-ing" to paper*) "Beginning at."
*Student* Okay.

Conferences in each style presented via audiotape, videotape, or dialogue transcript help trainees perceive the differences in the three options for tutorial interaction. As tutors study these models, they record their impressions on the Tutoring Option Worksheet (Figure 7), which can then be used to assess a trainee's ability to recognize elements of specific tutoring styles and to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the three options.

### *Further Training Techniques*

To show trainees what tutoring is really like, demonstrate the process with a student writer or ask an experienced tutor to demonstrate. Even better, because the session can be preselected, show a videotape. In either case, students who are nearing the end of their training readily see that flexibility and spontaneity govern how they will use what they have learned in a given tutoring session. They are quickly brought to the realization that tutoring happens *between* people and is a complicated interaction, not a mere following of numbered steps.

A second technique is to ask students to assume first the role of tutor and then the role of writer. Playing out these roles gives trainees many insights into tutoring, and their confidence grows as they begin to model recommended behaviors. Role-playing can begin early and informally when trainees pair up to complete Tutor Critiques (Figure 4) on each other's writing. As trainees become more experienced, however, role-playing is done with greater sophistication until, at the end of the training, pairs of tutors are confident enough to play out a session while the other trainees critique it. The Tutoring Option Worksheet (Figure 7) can be adapted for this purpose by deleting the option heads: Teacher-centered, Student-centered, and Collaborative.

A polished tutor is aware of the message given by tone of voice and body language, and tutors can ensure a positive message by learning to manipulate three areas: posture, gesture, and tone of voice.

Posture, because it is seen at a distance, is the first message the tutor sends to the writer. The tutor should adopt a posture that is alert but relaxed. If the tutor is overly alert, the writer may read nervousness, insecurity, even anger; if the tutor is too relaxed, the writer may read fatigue or indifference. When tutoring begins, the tutor should indicate interest and personal involvement by leaning slightly toward the writer. Tutoring generally occurs at a distance closer than that of most school interactions but not as close as the distance of family and friends. Psychologists recommend avoiding the intimate and public distances and working in the personal and social area, probably about eighteen inches to four feet. Leaning back or angling away from the writer may suggest a tutor's desire to move to the public distance and discontinue the interaction.

The tutor's gestures are also monitored by the writer and, therefore, open to use by the well-trained tutor. At the first moment of interaction, the tutor should establish eye contact and smile. When tutoring is under way, the tutor can nod to show approval or understanding. Gestures that might be interpreted as showing inattention or boredom—fidgeting, checking the clock, doodling, gazing into the distance—should be scrupulously avoided.

Tone of voice is another message, and the most appropriate tone is one that is friendly and informed, approachable and efficient. If the tutor sounds harsh, the writer turns away; on the other hand, if the tutor sounds too warm, the writer may doubt just how effective the session can be.

Once aware of the power of posture, gesture, and tone of voice, the tutor has taken the first step in mobilizing that power for the tutoring session. Since body language and tone of voice are an integral part of the tutorial interaction, they should also be a part of the instructor's evaluation of that interaction.

### *The Tutorial Environment*

The environment in which the tutoring session takes place speaks to the writer immediately, even before the tutor does. If the writing lab is cluttered, with little space for writers to sit or to place their gear, they may hesitate to become involved. If there is ample work space, even some rest space, writers are more likely to engage themselves. They will be even more likely to become involved and to stay involved if the lab is bright and cheerful. Psychologists have shown that the colors red, blue, yellow, and green, in that order, are the most generally appealing. Combine these colors with some daylight and well-lighted work spaces, and writers will respond to the invitation.

Once writers decide to join a tutoring session, they must work, and the physical appearance of the lab should communicate that it is an efficient and effective place in which to work. It should be well stocked with paper, pencils, pens, even typewriters (but they are best used in another room to reduce noise). Reference books like dictionaries and handbooks should be conveniently at hand. But most important, tutors should be available, and they should look available. This look can be created by having tutors sit so that writers can sit next to them and by having tutors keep the work space clear of their own gear. What writer could refuse an obviously approachable tutor in a pleasant work area?

The tutoring environment in the classroom is different from that of the writing lab but it serves a similar purpose. In the elementary school, the classroom can be arranged to create a mini-lab, a writing place similar to the reading places already a part of many classrooms. It should be a separate, private, well-stocked work area with two or three small tables or pairs of desks. In secondary school or college classrooms, the back row can be reserved for writers and their tutors, with pairs moving to the tutoring row when a writer feels a conference is necessary. Best of all, and at all levels, workshop days can be scheduled when the entire class divides into writer/tutor pairs while the teacher circulates, helping with the tutoring and monitoring the interaction, or holds conferences with as many individual students as possible.

**The Training Schedule**

Although many tutor trainers work within the format of the traditional fifteen-week semester, others, especially those who use tutoring as part of a composition class, must condense the material to meet quite different time frames. What follows is an outline of a fifteen-week course in tutor training. Although trainees complete eight essays during the course, only the subject of the first is specified here.

Week One

Students complete the Writing Attitude Scale shown in Figure 8 (pretraining measurement).

Students complete a writing sample (pretraining measurement).

Instructor explains the composing process.

Week Two

Students complete drafts of Essay 1: "How I Write."

Instructor and students discuss the composing process in connection with these drafts.

Instructor explains positive rapport and positive paper comments with reference to the Tutor Critique Sheet (Figure 4).

Students use their drafts of Essay 1 to complete items 1 and 2 of the Tutor Critique Sheet.

Week Three

Instructor explains the priority of concerns, introducing the idea of HOCs and LOCs.

Instructor explains and illustrates the first HOC (thesis and focus) and strategies for improvement.

Students complete drafts for Essay 2 and fill in items 1–3a on the Tutor Critique Sheets for Essays 1 and 2.

Week Four

Instructor explains and illustrates the second HOC (voice or tone) and strategies for improvement.

Students complete drafts for Essay 3 and fill in items 1–3b on the Tutor Critique Sheets for Essays 1–3.

Instructor explains and illustrates the third HOC (organization) and strategies for improvement.

Week Five

Students complete drafts of Essay 4 and items 1–3c on the Tutor Critique Sheets for Essays 1–4.

Instructor explains and illustrates the fourth HOC (development) and strategies for improvement.

Students complete drafts of Essay 5 and items 1–3d on the Tutor Critique Sheets for Essays 1–5.

Week Six

Instructor explains and illustrates LOCs and strategies for improvement.

Students complete drafts for Essay 6 and items 1–4 on the Tutor Critique Sheets for Essays 1–6.

Week Seven

Instructor evaluates student skills with HOCs and LOCs by discussing their completed Tutor Critique Sheets.

Instructor and trainees discuss the importance of body language, tone of voice, and the tutoring environment.

Week Eight

Instructor presents the three options for tutorial interaction: student-centered, collaborative, and teacher-oriented.

Instructor demonstrates or shows videotapes of the three tutorial options.

Students complete drafts of Essay 7 and use them to role-play the three tutorial options.

Week Nine

Instructor explains record keeping.

Instructor and students discuss the tutoring model.

Students observe an instructor demonstration of a videotaped tutorial session based on a draft that has been reproduced and distributed to the class.

Week Ten

Students critique the instructor demonstration or the videotape, using the Tutoring Option Worksheet.

Students complete drafts for Essay 8 and use them to role-play tutoring sessions.

Instructor and students critique these role-playing sessions.

Weeks Eleven through Fourteen

Students tutor writing students who are not in the tutor training class.

Instructor or senior writing lab staff directly supervise the student tutors.

Instructor evaluates the students.

Week Fifteen

Students complete the Writing Attitude Scale (posttraining measurement).

Students complete a writing sample (posttraining measurement.)

Several features of the training schedule require additional comment. Whatever the boundaries of the schedule, the growth in writing ability of trainees should be measured; so should changes in their attitude toward writing. We use the Writing Attitude Scale (Figure 8) to assess change in the affective domain and a writing sample to assess change in writing ability. The attitude scale, derived in part from Daly and Miller (1975),

**Writing Attitude Scale**

There are no right or wrong responses to the following statements about writing. Please indicate as honestly as possible how you feel about each statement on the scale provided.

| | strongly agree | agree | uncertain | disagree | strongly disagree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| + | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1. I look forward to writing down my own ideas. |
| + | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2. I have no fear of my writing's being evaluated. |
| − | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3. I hate writing. |
| + | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4. If I have something to express, I'd rather write it than say it. |
| − | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5. I am afraid of writing when I know what I write will be evaluated. |
| − | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6. My mind usually seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition. |
| − | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7. Expressing my ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time. |
| − | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8. I don't like my compositions to be evaluated. |
| − | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9. I see writing as having no more value than other forms of communication. |
| + | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 10. I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas clearly in writing. |
| − | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 11. I see writing as an outdated, useless way of communicating. |
| + | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 12. In my major or in the field of my future occupation, writing is an enjoyable experience. |
| + | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 13. I seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly. |
| + | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 14. Writing is a beneficial skill. |
| + | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 15. Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience. |
| − | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 16. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in an essay. |
| − | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 17. When I have something to express, I'd rather say it than write it. |
| + | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 18. An ability to write will be worthwhile in my occupation. |
| + | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 19. I enjoy writing. |
| − | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 20. I'm no good at writing. |

Figure 8. The Scale Used to Assess Attitudes toward Writing before and after Training.

consists of twenty statements to which the students react. To score the attitude scale, add all scores marked positive to forty and subtract all scores marked negative. (40 + [positive scores] − [negative scores] = attitude scale). A person who has an extremely negative attitude toward writing should score a zero, and a person who has an extremely positive attitude toward writing should score an eighty. (Your test results may be more accurate if you cover the postive and negative indicators when you copy this scale for your students.) Growth in positive attitude toward writing is shown by a positive pre/posttraining difference. The writing measurement is based on paired pre/post papers written in response to tasks of similar difficulty. Each student's papers are given a "pick-of-the-better" rating by two or three raters. The posttraining paper should be consistently chosen as the better.

Perhaps the greatest advantage of a fifteen-week schedule is the number of papers trainees write—in addition to their tutor critiques. We believe, like many others, that writing skills are directly related to practice, and we expect tutors to improve their own writing skills during the training course.

A final feature, deserving note by its absence from the schedule, is that trainees do not begin to tutor until they are thoroughly trained. Although some tutor trainers (Bruffee 1980) encourage more immediate tutoring, we believe that a writer who experiences a useless or ineffective tutoring session is a writer who is very unlikely to return to the writing lab. While the collaborative interaction is the essence of tutoring and will help to improve a piece even if the tutor has had no training, we do not believe that the use of untrained tutors is the best way to present the tutoring experience to student writers who we hope will commit themselves to working frequently with a tutor.

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